

HOW TO LOOK AT A POLITICAL FILM

Paper given at a panel on Latin American Cinema at the Latin American Studies Convention, April 1976, Atlanta. Audience saw THE DOUBLE DAY and THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY before the talk.

Today I shall speak about how political information is conveyed in a film on a political theme. I shall use as examples the two films shown in conjunction with this talk--one documentary film, THE DOUBLE DAY, made by a group of women filmmakers sponsored by UNESCO, and one fictional film, THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY, made collectively by Jorge Sanjinés and the ^fUkumau Bolivian ^fFilmmaking ^gGroup. For the sake of discussion, today I shall talk mainly about the films themselves as we receive them in the US. A more complete discussion should also consider the filmmaking process, responses of Latin American audiences, and distribution networks, and censorship problems.

In my analysis, I have asked the following questions about THE DOUBLE DAY and THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY. Hopefully, by extension, you will find it useful to apply this kind of analysis to other films, especially those you use in the classroom. The questions we can ask are these:

1. What is the ostensible purpose of each film?
2. What are the structuring techniques employed? How does verbal narration work within the film politically? That is, what is the content of what is being said, what is the purpose of the narration within the film, and are there any problems with it?
3. In terms of analyzing the visual track, we can ask the following questions: When is the cinematography politically effective and when is it ambiguous? What kinds of things are shown in detail, what in episodic sequences (I shall define episodic sequence later), and what things have been omitted?
4. How does the music direct our emotions, often not very subtletly?
5. What demands can we make on the political message given by the film?

I might add that an important question currently being taken up by other political filmmakers but not seen in these two films is the whole question of cinematic realism. These other filmmakers feel the need to use cinema to comment on the media itself, to incorporate within their films a discussion

of their relation to their subjects, and to use Brechtian distancing tactics to break the "codes" of realism.

If we ask ourselves, "What seems to be the intent of a political film?", we begin to look at the parameters the film sets up within with we are to consider a certain political question. For example, THE DOUBLE DAY is an international co-production which was obviously intended for 16mm distribution and classroom use. It was influenced by the women's liberation movement and has a trade unionist perspective. It is explicitly anti-capitalist, but it strangely never explains Latin American capitalism within the context of imperialism and underdevelopment.

THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY was made as a didactic film for the Andean people, even if, in fact, it cannot be shown there. The mythic simplification and noble able portrayal of the Andean people is obvious to anyone who sees the film. But it is questionable from seeing the film what kind of critique, if any, the filmmakers wanted to make about the guerrillas portrayed in the film. In particular, since the fictional guerrillas seem to be modeled on Che Guevara's group, viewers would want to know where the film stood on Che's foco theory of revolution. In one sense, the film does criticize Che explicitly. Like Che's group in Bolivia, the film's guerrillas come from the outside and are mostly Spanish-speaking. However, unlike Che's group, they have a few members who speak Quechua, the native language, and all work side by side with the local people to gain their confidence. Also, unlike Che, the film recognizes that massive retaliation by US-equipped troops ("The Principal Enemy") is the single greatest threat facing rural insurgency. That Sanjines himself discusses his films' purposes in interviews with the press is of some help in knowing his political philosophy, but I think we have all discovered that artists are not totally trustworthy when discussing their intent. In this case, the effect of the film may indeed be different from what the Ukumau group intended.

The Structuring Techniques in the Film, THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY

There are basically four kinds of sequences in the film, THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY, and these are all interspersed equally throughout the film, giving it a patterned simplicity and adding to its epic and mythic quality. First we have shots of the narrator as a sage and story-teller. These are usually symmetrically composed, taken face-on. Second, we have action sequences, with rapid cutting and the camera moving to express the tension of the situation. These sequences often are the ones that move the plot forward. Thus, at the beginning, such action sequences portray a farmer's wife and child pulling at a farmer to keep him from going to claim his bull stolen by the landlord of the hacienda, and his being executed and beheaded by the landlord as the wife and child look on. At the end of the film, such action sequences are also used to film the execution of the rebellious villagers by the soldiers and a shoot-out between the soldiers and the guerrillas in the jungle lowlands.

More politically significant and more cinematically innovative than the action sequences are the sequences of group discussion or group action. In these, the camera often moves in a circle around the group. The camera knits the ~~group~~ together, yet it still makes us an observer on, not a participant in, the action. It gives a feeling of that community's solidarity. Such sequences are used when the farmer's wife silently displays her husband's head in the village and when the villagers testify at the sheriff's office against the landlord and his foreman. These circular long-takes are also used to show the villagers massed at communal meetings or to show the villagers and the guerrillas together.

Finally, the fourth kind of sequence is composed of what I would call epic shots. These show small figures or ~~groups~~ of peasants against the sky, with white mountain peaks in the background, or against the cultivated fields. Such shots have a singular effect of proclaiming: "These are the people; these are

the moments that symbolize their whole life." Such shots were used when the farmer, his wife, and his child went toward the landlord's and then as she and the child headed away toward the village. They were used to depict the massing of the people in the countryside to go to the hacienda for revenge and then to present the people taking the landlord and his henchman as prisoners into the sheriff. Such an epic background is also used in association with the narrator, who is seen first against the ancient Incan ruins of Macchu Piccu, then against a lake, and finally against the sky at the end. In general, then, Sanjines has invented a cinematic technique to express a whole people's experience, especially in the latter two kinds of shots.

[To digress, although I know most of you have had the opportunity to see both these films at this conference, I should like to indicate the rest of the plot of THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY for those who have not seen it. The sheriff releases the landlord and foreman and has those peasants jailed who had made out depositions against his friends. Wounded and famished guerrilla fighters arrive in the area and persuade a local woman to sell them food. They gain the villagers' confidence by setting up a medical clinic and by working along with the farmers in the fields. They seize the landlord and his henchman, whom they try in a popular court and then execute. When they finally explain their purpose as revolutionaries and ask the peasants to join them, only a few villagers do. They move on with a few recruits. The national military, aided by US intelligence officers and US equipment, wipes out the villagers and engages with the guerrillas in combat in the jungle lowlands, from which a few guerrillas emerge to carry on. The last shot is of the peasant narrator climbing a mountain, with the sound of native music and bombs in the background, symbolic of open warfare, that is, revolution.]

The Structure of THE DOUBLE DAY

The film is composed of images of people talking and representative shots of women's work activity. It has been filmed all over South America but specific countries are not mentioned. Those familiar with Latin culture can identify the locale by the speakers' accents. Among the speakers, there are basically three types of people presented: women labor leaders or groups of ordinary women talking; some "authorities," often male, being interviewed by the filmmakers; some other people interviewed--men and women--who represent the attitudes which we can label "false consciousness."

In a voice-over, a female narrator gives us privileged information. This voice introduces sections and is heard over the sections that give a visual presentation of women's and men's work. It is what I would call "the-voice-of-God" narration and is counterbalanced verbally by the many women who are allowed to speak their own ideas.

The basic structuring principle of the film is drawn from concepts about women's work in South America. These concepts, as I mentioned, are made explicit in voice-off, and they allow us to summarize the various sections with labels. Let me just run through these concepts around which sequences are structured, in the order in which they occur. With some I'll indicate more specifically what we see on the visual track of the film. The film starts with a sequence of the Andean high plateau area, ⁺ when the mines, then the urban shanty towns, presumably outside LaPaz. It is in this sequence in the slums where a group of Bolivian women wearing native dress introduce the concept of the "double day," that is, working both at a job and at home. The film then gives a summary sequence of the life of a working woman with a family in a city, a discussion of and by housemaids, a sequence of house work (intercut with shots of male workers), a discussion of day care, a section about women's urban labor--with sequences showing a secretarial pool, a cracker factory, and a small-machine

assembly plant. There is then a sequence of revealing children's sex-role socialization in a school athletic program. The film moves to show a women's liberation group as well as a trade union women's group, both of which meet in their members' urban apartments. THE DOUBLE DAY ends with the Bolivian mining woman with which it began. The interview with her and shots of the Bolivian Andean landscape form a framework for the film.

This kind of structure creates a problem for the viewer. The film strives hard to make all of the visual footage representative of something; the director's effort to jam in so many representative moments makes the film see^M too cramped. Furthermore, the structure^s of the film acts to deny much of the specificity of its imagery. We are not told the locale, the nationality, and--more importantly and politically--we have no idea of the local political and economic situations that shaped what we are seeing. I might add that, in visual terms, this film has the most marvellously specific industrial footage from Latin America I have ever seen. For me, just to see that, even without a sound track, is an education in itself, since such glimpses of Latin American work life on film are so rare.

Narration

The second point I would like to discuss is the use of narration in both films. Following from the discussion of the structure of THE DOUBLE DAY, we can see that the narrative is often used as a kind of structural "glue" in that film, yet that "glue" is delivering very important ideas and often either minimizes them or oversimplifies them. The demographic statistics given at the beginning do not make much impact and get lost. Examples of oversimplification include the following transitional statements made between sequences: "The coming of the twentieth century brought new relations of production. Let us see how the old order gave way to the new one created by capitalism." In another transitional statement, the voice-off tells us that people flocked to urban slums or barriadas "as they were pushed out of the country by large land-

owners." Certainly such a statement serves more as a cinematic glue to introduce us to a sequence depicting the barriadas than as any kind of adequate explanation of the complex social process that created these slums.

Other times, the film uses the voice of one of the people being interviewed over a series of images--so that voice then serves the same function as the narration. Such voices state the following concepts: women serve as capitalism's reserve labor force; their unpaid work at home is integral to the functioning of capitalism; we need more communal, more socialized methods of housekeeping; if more women work, there will be greater unemployment. (This last statement to me is highly problematic. It is spoken by a male speaker we otherwise do not identify with, but his words are heard in voice-off over a series of images of factory labor, a cinematic technique that valorizes this voice and gives it the same status as the narrator's voice. For that reason, I could not tell if the filmmakers agreed or disagreed with this idea that women's entry into the work force increases general unemployment.)

I think most people in our media-aware culture are beginning to have a healthy suspicion of the voice-of-God narration that just spoonfeeds us an interpretation of the images that we see. And in this case, since the women being interviewed are so very articulate about their own situations, I would have to challenge whether or not we need the voice-off explaining so much at all. Certainly it should have been used less. Toward the end of the film there is a sequence of trade union women gathered at one person's house talking about their personal, economic, and political life in highly sophisticated terms. The voice-over enters and speaks over images of the women conversing. It says patly, "Unless women assume their role in the class struggle, their potential for liberation will not be realized." Such a use of the voice-over is gratuitous, even insulting, especially when it tells us, "Now that's what you've just seen and heard."

The makers of THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY make the social and political role of the narrator explicit within their film, and they draw on an indigenous cultural tradition of the storyteller to do so. There is an oral tradition in Quechua and Aymara Andean villages, and not only is there an old man narrator within the film, but in the few times that the film was shown in Peruvian Andean villages, we have reports that it was first introduced by someone who told the gathered peasants the story of what they were about to see, then the film was shown, and then it was discussed by the gathered community in a group.

Cinematically, the filmmakers did not want to make an action film and used the device of the narrator in a specifically Brechtian sense--to destroy tension by announcing in advance what was going to happen and to state explicitly the political lesson or moral to be learned. In real life, this actor, Saturnino Huillca, has been an organizer of peasant unions over the last thirty years, although this is not mentioned in the film. In the film, his role is both to destroy tension and also to give the relating of this episode a mythic dimension. He stands as a kind of Jungian old man who both tells us how to endure the trial and shows us the way.

Politically, there are two specific problems in the use of the narrator in THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY. First, not to mention who he is and his past political activities is like using but not identifying Saul Alinsky as a narrator in a fictional political film in the United States. Peasant organizing itself reached its height under the aegis of the popular Trotskyist Peruvian organizer-turned-guerrilla, Hugo Blanco, from 1958 to 1963; the fact, ^{that} the film never mentions the existence of these rural political federations indicates that the filmmakers themselves had not come to terms with the Blanco model of political organizing.

Second, internal to the film, the narrator's political statements and summaries carry a great deal of weight because of his privileged position within the film. After the sequence where the guerrillas help the farmers with the

planting, the narrator relates, "And they said, 'And now we must fight together. Because we saw they were good people and helped us, we backed them.' Certainly, as an explanation for one's political behavior, this is inadequate. Real-life guerrillas would have to convince people to fight for a more rationally argued political cause. In contrast^{to} the purely moral appeal offered by the guerrillas in the film, Hugo Blanco argued that the campesino is an instinctive Marxist, understanding class relations, and can be appealed to in this way. Throughout the film, the guerrillas' power of persuasion, however, is presented/in terms of primarily their personal example-- rather than their entering into a closely-argued dialogue with political equals.

The old-man narrator also makes the only political critique of the guerrillas found in the film. Introducing the section of US military retaliation, he states, "The guerrillas went into the uninhabited jungle, and we stayed in the jungle. Together we'd have been better organized and could have fought more successfully." However, these words go by very fast and are counterbalanced visually by the guerrillas' heroic emergence from the jungle and the narrator's own image at the end.

The Political Impact of the Cinematography

The third way to evaluate a political film is to evaluate the ways in which the cinematography bears or reinforces concepts about society and also--in a film's less successful moments--where the cinematography delivers an ambiguous message or even works against the seeming intent of the film..

In THE DOUBLE DAY, the women who are interviewed as single individuals or whose work is shown in detail, as with the one woman packing, stapling and stacking cartons in the cracker factory, are made into cinematic icons. Let me explain what I mean by the term icon here. Because of the way their image is established in the frame, because of their racial features, dress, and class type, and sometime because of the striking background against which they are

filmed, the women become representative of whole social strata in Latin America.

This is particularly true of the mining woman who becomes the romanticized indigena. She is seen as both the past strength and the future hope of Latin America. In her bulk, she is the mother-earth figure. The interviews with her provide the framework for the film. What is lost, what the filmmakers do not tell us, are the specifics of her political activity, conducted over many years. For example, she mentions the Siglo XX mine and the "night of San Juan," but how many film viewers will know about the important political organizing that has gone on for years in that mine, the date of the San Juan massacre and its significance in Bolivian politics, or the kind of political role a woman would play as head of the "housewives" organization? ^{This Indian woman} She is obviously a powerful and articulate person. The filmmakers justly use her as an icon. However, they do her an injustice by merely presenting her as being "for women" and not showing how she has helped to develop specific political structures in a specific social context. In particular, they do her an injustice by not showing the way an indigenous woman's political organization can be sustained in the face of great repression over many years.

Other figures who are iconized in THE DOUBLE DAY include a rich blonde woman sitting in a cafe; she is seen against the background of sailboats on a beautiful lake with her Fanta soda on the table in the foreground. The image iconizes her as the representative of upper class women's false consciousness. What we can guess from the image about her mentality is borne out by her words. She says that women really work only for "pin money" and that women would have fewer conflicts if they made themselves more attractive to men and used their feminine wiles.

In general, the men are iconized to look foolish. The film does this ^{through} by a certain kind of visual composition. The men are shown in medium shot or close up in a symmetrical composition, which visually isolates them in the frame

and puts ~~them~~ outside a social context. They are allowed to speak to the camera face on and reveal their erroneous notions about women's roles and their own exaggerated self-esteem. This is especially true of the visual presentation of the athletic director who smirks as he explains the "natural" division of boys' and girls' activities in his school. The film uses the same technique to portray two male administrators in the motor assembly factory: Jorge Rivera, who introduces himself as "lawyer, director of personnel," and the boss himself. The latter was filmed particularly effectively. We see the boss in a medium shot, with his thin gesturing hands at the bottom of the frame. He wears a suit, white shirt, and tie. In this film, these clothes immediately signal greater power, status, and class position, and such dress here makes it clear that this man is obviously not a worker in the background against which he is filmed. Most ironically visually, as he gestures with his delicate, well-manicured hands, he explains that women's hands are more delicate and sensitive than men's and thus most suitable for wiring motors. The audience laughs because everyone knows that this man's hands would be equally suited for such manual work but will never do it.

THE DOUBLE DAY often uses an episodic structure. Episodic sequences are very common in documentary films. Each shot in such a sequence standing for one stage in or one facet of a whole complex process. ^{The episodic} Such sequences are visually very effective in THE DOUBLE DAY. Here they are used to show the work of women in the Andean countryside, their work indoors, and the work of a city housewife cleaning up, caring for a child, and preparing for her husband's arrival home. However, too often these sequences are accompanied by a confusing narration in voice-over. The problem is usually that either we do not know who is speaking or there are too many ideas thrown out all at once.

THE DOUBLE DAY effectively counterposes to shots of the women, ^{shots of} men working. These visually indicate in a way that needs no extra verbal comment

the difference between the experiences of working men and working women. A good example of this juxtaposition occurs when the Bolivian miner's wife tells how her children were taught by their father to look down on her. At that point on the visual track we see a sequence showing men working in the mines. Similarly, during a discussion of the economic and social role of housework in a capitalist society, we see both shots of women doing housework and childcare and shots of men punching into work with their time cards.

One of the most effective and economic visual techniques in narrative cinema is using a single long shot to tell a whole story and to express social relations by its composition. Such a technique can easily make a political point. In *THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY*, we see this kind of shot when one landlord, who had been seized and taken into town by the angry peasants, is set free. The camera is positioned on a second story balcony where the sheriff is standing looking down at the crowd on the street. The crowd consists of the peasants, soldiers, and the landlord and his henchman. In the frame, as the camera angles down, we see the sheriff's hand on the balcony rail in the lower left corner in the foreground. Down below on the street, the armed soldiers release and untie the landlord. Then, forming a semicircle, with their guns they push the peasants back to the upper right corner of the frame. In the center of the frame stands the landlord looking up at the sheriff, and we hear the sheriff's voice saying, "Don Miguel is a respectable man. Here justice prevails."

In *THE DOUBLE DAY*, long shots that describe a whole social situation include the images of small women figures culling coal lumps from a huge slag heap. There is also an excellent sequence of a woman doing housework, caring for her crying children, and setting the table for dinner. The last shot is of the neatly set table in the foreground and one young woman and the crying children in the background. The filmmakers shoot the scene with a wide angle lens for its distortion, which makes the shiny plates that symbolize how everything

must be ready when the husband comes home stand out even more.

A film gives many cinematic clues as to what the directors are most interested in politically. These clues are often indirect. For example, we should ask/"What actions and events did the directors choose to portray in the greatest detail?" In THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY it was the people's court where the guerrillas tried the landlord and his henchman, calling on all the campesinos to give testimony about the terrible abuses they and others had suffered at the hands of these two. In THE DOUBLE DAY, the section that gave us the most visual detail was the one filmed in the cracker factory. There one woman's physical labor is shown at great length; we encounter three women on the floor talking together about their working conditions; and the camera lingers on the shiny plastic-wrapped packages coming down the line, which visually emphasize\$ the commodity aspect of the finished product for which these women slave.

In THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY, the guerrillas when alone are filmed primarily in episodic sequences--especially the sequences showing their arrival with their sick members and their final battle. When I said earlier that visual ambiguity can undercut the political effectiveness of a film, we can see a good example of that here. The guerrillas' activities, arrival, capture of the landlord, and final battle, are all shot in a John Wayne-war-film kind of style, in contrast to the dignified epic style used to film the peasants. Most ambiguous visually and politically is the one sequence in the film where the guerrillas provide an extensive theoretical explanation for their actions. This sequence is filmed with little camera movement and static compositions inside one peasant's house, and the peasant hardly enters into a political dialogue with the guerrillas, who just spout out their lines. The dialogue runs somewhat as follows:

Guerrillas: "We're guerrillas, ready for anything so that the whole people can have a batter life. For that we need a socialist government."

Peasant: "Yes, that would be fine."

The guerrillas explain imperialism and its relation to landowners' abuses.

The peasant finally responds, "I have confidence in you because you are good people who have our welfare at heart. I must talk this over with my friends."

Not only is the political interaction between guerrillas and peasant weak here but so is the visual presentation, which expresses very little complexity.

In contrast, there is a series of shots at the end of the film which introduce the idea of US military intervention in an effective visual way. We see a military radio operator in the Andes transmitting a message that the guerrillas were in that area ten days ago. The camera sweeps around in a circle to show U.S. stamped on the soldiers' backpacks. There is a cut to another radio receiver, and the camera in a long-take follows as a soldier takes the message down a long corridor to a room where we see a group of national military officers standing around a US military advisor. The radio not only functions as effective editing device to unite scenes in the country with a scene at the military base, but it also effectively conveys a political concept, that is, the extension of US military technology and control into the Andean campo. And as the camera follows the operator as he walks down the hall to deliver the message, the whole visual composition connotes a sense of the corridors of power and backroom decisionmaking.

In THE DOUBLE DAY the most politically ambiguous sections are those showing upper middle class women. One well-dressed woman who is interviewed criticizes middle class women who hire maids. As she effectively points out, this exploitation of another woman, who also usually has a home and family to tend, frees the richer woman to go out to work for her own "liberation." We want to know where the speaker stands. Does she hire a maid? Most women of her class position in South America do have at least part-time household help. If she had a maid, she should have admitted to being part of the problem. If

she had decided not to have a maid, that would have distinguished her from her friends, and it would have been very effective to show her discussing this. Also, from what political perspective is she speaking? Does she belong to a women's liberation group? From where has she developed her ideas about women's oppression and liberation?

I had even more difficulty interpreting the visual and iconic presentation of the one group of women who spoke about problems with the nuclear family and about women's sex-role socialization. A group of middle class women were gathered together to discuss their situation as women in a way that roughly paralleled a women's liberation "rap" group in the United States. In terms of the content of their discussion, I felt that the filmmakers agreed with them. However, not only were these women well-to-do, but the sequence was shot in overexposed film, so that the faces appeared excessively white, grotesquely accented with bluish-red lipstick. The context of these women's daily life was not described, nor were their work situations. Because of the sequence's adverse visual impact, it is not clear how we are to receive what the women here say.

In comparison, in THE DOUBLE DAY, we also have a sequence of labor union women together. They identify themselves, discuss how their concerns are different from those of the political parties, and define their stance both as anti-capitalist and as concerned with the social liberation of women. It is clear that the film agrees with them, and their strong visual presentation reinforces our good impression of their political ideas.

Music

Music is often the most emotionally manipulative tactic in a film, and its emotional use is obvious to most of us. As a matter of fact, it is because of the way that THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY uses heroic music which makes me think that the filmmakers had little severe criticism to proffer either about the film's

guerrillas or Che's foto theory of revolution. Native Andean flute music accompanies the epic shots of the peasants throughout the film. It gives us a sense of their communal cohesiveness and militancy. There is a progression of this music with orchestration added as their militancy increases. At the end of the film, ^{as} the guerrillas leave the jungle ~~at the end~~ and as we see the narrator on the mountain top in freeze frame, the native airs have turned into martial ones, now played with full orchestration. In cinematic terms, the music valorizes the guerrillas as it grants them a fully heroic end.

In THE DOUBLE DAY, we hear a folk song as the titles appear over the background of the Andean mountains. The song is about tierra-madre, mother-earth, which refers both to the ancient Incan goddess Pachamama, who represents the earth, and also to Latin American women. We should maintain a healthy suspicion of mother-earth symbols in film: they are laden with connotations of women's place and women's nature. A film that challenges such notions should not depend on such imagery and music in an uncritical way.

The most effective use of music in that film is presented in a solo sung on the streets by a girl street urchin. It is a traditional ballad which, in effect, sums up the pathos of the girl's life: "I'm rebellious because the world made me that way, because nobody cared or treated me with love. I'd like to be as happy as a little girl and discover what's within me, as men learn things in friendship."

Political Demands to Make on Political Films

When we make political demands on political films, we start to criticize the things that are now shown and discussed. I found that both films fell down in their failure to portray the role of the following in the lives of the people: ~~consumer goods, marketing, and merchandising~~; the village school teacher, priest, and transistor radio as bearers of culture and as political influences; and the kinds of communal and intercommunal contacts people have. In terms of the

kind of political analysis THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY intends to elicit from an audience, such lacks are disasterous. The film gives us a portrait of villagers who are totally isolated. We see them neither on a market day nor in contact with other villages. In real life, the villages in that area had developed a whole intercommunal network to drive out shysters who had tried to defraud them of their communal lands, but the filmmakers choose to present the peasants as totally dependent on the guerrillas. In the filmic presentation, with no support of other villages or any other political organization, of course, the peasants would be wiped out. It is not clear how the filmmakers could expect us to believe how rural resistance to oppression--under the circumstances portrayed in the film--could start a revolution at all.

The greatest political fault in THE DOUBLE DAY is that it does not ever mention either imperialism or the Catholic Church. From conversations I have had with people at random in Mexico, Bolivia, and Peru, I know that if anywhere you ask, "Tell me about women in this country," people will discuss population control, contraception, and the Catholic Church. And if you say, "Tell me about the situation of workers here," people will respond with a direct or indirect discussion of imperialism, especially in regard to the mines. That all the very articulate women in the film are not shown talking about either of these two topics can only lead me to conclude that mention of these was carefully edited out of the interviews used in the film.

Furthermore, in THE DOUBLE DAY, there is a startling lack of a portrayal of consumer goods and advertising and their role in women's lives. Consumerism is both a major aspect of US imperialism--for, contrary to the message of THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY, US domination doesn't just arrive when US planes do--and also a major aspect of all women's daily lives. Although THE DOUBLE DAY is explicitly anti-capitalist, it never analyzes the family as the unit of consumption under capitalism--surely a serious political lack in the film.

To conclude, THE DOUBLE DAY has the following advantages as a classroom film. It shows both agricultural and urban labor and it develops its title concept very clearly--the double day that women work at home and on the job. However, it also has disadvantages, which are related both to the cinematic structure chosen by the filmmakers and their failure to discuss imperialism's relation to Latin American capitalism--in this, an explicitly anti-capitalist film. THE PRINCIPAL ENEMY has a great emotional force and is a rare fictional portrayal of Andean people speaking their own language. I would not hesitate to show it to any class. However, since the filmmakers intended it to spur political analysis, the film must be criticized for being politically ambiguous in its cinematography and for failing to include certain key concepts that are essential to any discussion of peasant revolution.

In evaluating the political message and ultimately the effectiveness of any political film, we should submit that film to a two-pronged analysis. We should evaluate its explicit political content in terms of what we already know and we ^{must} look at the cinematography and structure to see the messages they bear.